GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:435
ANSWERED ON:27.07.2005
INDIANS IN PAK JAILS
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Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a)whether several Indian prisoners are languishing in various Pakistani jails particularly in Kot Lakhpat Jail in Lahore;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the steps taken/proposed to be taken to get them released at the earliest;

(d) whether Pakistan has released some Indian fishermen recently;

(e) if so the details thereof;

(f) whether the Government is aware that their boats were not returned by Pakistan; and

(g) if so, the facts in this regard and the action taken by the Government to get the rest of the fishermen and their boats released from captivity

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMED)

(a) & (b) Yes. According to available information, there are about 923 civilian prisoners, 371 fishermen and 54 Prisoners of War in Pakistani jails. However, Pakistan has acknowledged the presence of 182 civilian prisoners only and does not acknowledge presence of any Indian POWs in Pakistan.

(c) The Government has persistently taken up the matter of release of Indian prisoners through diplomatic channels and high level contacts from time to time.

During the Foreign Secretary level talks held on December 27-28, 2004 at Islamabad it was agreed that immediate notification would be provided to the respective High Commissions through the Foreign Ministries of the arrested Indian/Pakistani nationals, consular access would be given to all the civilian prisoners (including fishermen) held in each other`s country within three months from the date of their arrest and repatriation would be done immediately after completion of sentence and nationality verification.

During the visit of External Affairs Minister to Pakistan from February 15-17, 2005 and during the visit of President of Pakistan to India from April 16-18, 2005, the issue of early release and repatriation of all the Indian fishermen along with their boats was taken up.

(d) & (e) Yes, Sir. Pakistan released 800 Indian fishermen between January and March 2005, viz 266 on January 06 and 534 on March 22, 2005.

(f) & (g) Yes, Sir. There are about 198 Indian fishing boats in Pakistan`s custody which were detained between October 2003 and April 2005. The Government has repeatedly taken up the matter with Pakistan.